

Conservation Authorities are corporate bodies created under The Conservation Authorities Act by their constituent municipalities. Their responsibilities include: water management; the identification, mapping and designation of flood hazard lands; the operation of flood warning systems; and the operation of Authority flood control works where such works exist.

Municipalities may obtain assistance from their Conservation Authorities in identifying flood hazard lands and in developing municipal flood contingency plans.

Where there are no Conservation Authorities, district managers of the Ministry of Natural Resources will assist municipalities and residents of unorganized communities to develop municipal or community flood contingency plans.

The Ministry of Natural Resources has established and maintains a program under which a co-ordinated response of the Government of Ontario can be mobilized and delivered to municipalities upon declaration of a flood emergency by the Minister. The provincial response is an extension of local flood contingency plans when municipal or community resources are inadequate or exhausted.

Household Flood Emergency Plan

Each household in a flood hazard area should develop its own flood emergency plan. Planning should be completed

before floods occur. The best time is NOW. Hurried decisions made under emergency conditions may be faulty or even fatal. Each member of the household should know the plan and have his or her own written copy. Periodic review will prevent confusion. The following subjects should be covered under the household plan:

- Decide what to do and in what order.
- Determine the best way to employ the capabilities of all persons in the household.
- Find out where and how to obtain outside assistance.
- Know when to evacuate the premises, where to go and the best routes to safety.
- Keep emergency lighting (flashlights, lanterns) ready.
- Keep sandbags and gasoline-powered pumps available (for shallow flooding).
- Put papers and small valuables in storage — elevated, dry and safe.
- Raise appliances above flood levels.
- Roll up rugs and move furniture to higher levels.
- Disconnect and move electric motors.
- Provide temporary storage for freezer contents.
- Turn off electricity at main switch.



- Turn off gas. Disconnect and secure propane tanks.
- Secure yard furniture and exterior floatable objects.
- Move pets or livestock to higher ground.
- Move autos and other mobile equipment to high ground.
- Do NOT plug basement floor drains. Allow pressure to equalize to prevent structural damage to basement, floors and walls.

Sources of Information:

If you live in a municipality, go to your municipality's office and find out how its flood warning system works and what assistance you can get under its flood contingency plan.

If you live in a community without municipal organization, contact the district manager in the Ministry's district office in your area. He will endeavor to arrange a meeting with community residents to discuss planning for flood emergencies and the responsibilities under the Ministry's program.

If you are uncertain as to the risks of flooding where you live, consult your municipality, the local Conservation Authority or the Ministry's district office.

It's up to you!

Bear in mind that even though your municipality or community may have a well developed flood contingency plan, **the initial responsibility for protection of your property against flooding rests with you.**

FLOODING!

It can happen to you.

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Seasonal Floods

Flooding is a natural event. It happens every spring in some areas because of melting snow, rain or ice jams. It happens in summer or fall as a result of storms.

The lands in danger of seasonal flooding are the low-lying areas adjacent to rivers, streams and lakes, including some reaches of the Great Lakes shorelines.

The probability of flooding is recognized through historical experience and there is usually ample time for municipalities and residents to implement temporary measures to prevent or reduce flood damage.

On the other hand, the fact that a given area has not been flooded for many years is no assurance that floods will not occur. Almost every year, property owners somewhere in Ontario (in areas where flooding was not anticipated) suffer extensive losses because of flooding for which they were not prepared.

Flash Floods

A flash flood, as the name implies, develops quickly. If undetected it can strike unexpectedly and with devastating effect.

A flash flood can develop during late winter because of abnormally high temperatures which cause snow to melt rapidly. Prolonged heavy rain, falling on snow or frozen ground, can also cause flash flooding.

In any season, during storms of long



duration, abnormally heavy rainfall can have the same result — water accumulates faster than water courses can carry it away. Water levels rise quickly and water spreads over flood plains and low-lying areas.

When a flash flood is imminent, there is only one thing to do — get out of its way as quickly as possible.

Flood Forecasts

The Streamflow Forecast Centre of the Ministry of Natural Resources provides flood forecasts to Conservation Authorities and to the Ministry's field offices where Authorities have not been established. The Authorities and the field offices relay the forecasts to the

affected municipalities and communities without municipal organization.

The Centre receives information from the Atmospheric Environment Services of Environment Canada (the Weather Office). It analyzes this information along with data from other sources and evaluates the probability of flooding.

It is not always possible for the Centre or the Weather Office to forecast abnormally heavy rain in local areas or to be aware of other local factors that can cause flooding. It may not always be possible to forecast the likely occurrence of a flash flood.

Caution: do NOT rely on receiving advance warning of a flash flood.

Flood Damage

Flooding can damage or even destroy houses and their contents. It can damage or destroy business establishments and their stocks of goods, fixtures and records. It can cause similar damage to farm buildings and machinery and result in the loss of livestock and growing crops.

Flooding can make roads impassable, wash out bridges and disrupt public utilities.

Flooding can cause the loss of lives through drowning.

The impact of flooding on developed lands can be reduced by planning in advance what should be done to reduce damage and hazards. If flooding occurs, or is likely to occur, action can be taken according to a plan.

Responsibilities

Residents of flood hazard areas must maintain an awareness of the potential flood hazards they face and develop emergency plans for the event.

Personal emergency plans should include procedures for the protection of possessions and the safe evacuation of all members of the household if it should become necessary.

Municipalities and communities without municipal organization are encouraged to prepare flood contingency plans. Their plans should include provisions for issuing flood warnings to residents and action plans for the use of local resources to combat flood emergencies.